

Book Review

Ezrow, N., Frantz, E., & Kendall-Taylor, A. (2015). *Development and the state in the 21st century: Tackling the challenges facing the developing world*. Palgrave Macmillan.

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A state is a supreme entity to regulate mechanism and run government of a sovereign territory. In fact, it is much more than just running government. It also comprises executive, bureaucracy, courts and other institutions. Those states that successfully distribute and redistribute resources and wealth are called developed states. While those states which barely govern institutions and distribution of resources are called developing or underdeveloped states. In 21st century, where research and development is very advance there are many countries that are facing wicked problems¹. These problems are different in each country. But one can try to minimize the effects of these problems by adopting precedence set by any other country.

Keeping in view the above situation, Ezrow, Frantz & Kendall-Taylor wrote this book focusing on why it is important for a country to be developed? Ezrow et al. also discuss the challenges developing countries are facing in their way to development. Moreover, the authors also reveal success stories in some developing regions providing hope to other developing countries and their citizens to reform their institutions and policies in order to advance positively towards development.

This book is organized into three parts. First part is further divided into four chapters, which comprises of introducing development, its importance and major actors to development.

¹ A wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize.

Second part of this book mainly focuses on the obstacles states face in order to get develop. Nine such obstacles have been discussed in each different chapter (i.e. chapter 5-13). In addition to discussing obstacles, the book also explains how different institutions can act to increase development within any country. Moreover, these chapters refer to some relevant case studies as a success or failure story to elaborate on practical implications. Third part of the book is comprised of a brief conclusion that has been presented in the form of discussions from all 13 chapters.

The first chapter of the book concretes on the basic concepts, ‘what is *development* and what are the ways to measure development and the role of state to get developed’. A brief description of the roadmap of the book is also described at the end of this chapter. The chapter concludes that other than western countries and those countries which are associated with USSR and communism, all other countries in the world are called developing or less developed countries. In order to include their selves in develop states these countries need to reduce poverty; bring equality, increase level of education, health and environmental protection. These all changes can be achieved from political, economic or social change within the institutions of the state.

Second chapter describes *theories of development* referring to two of such theories i.e. modernization theory² and theory of structuralism³, both of these theories have their own limitations. For instance in Tanzania self-reliance and little planning draw the state in severe poverty and in Brazil implementation of ISI policies and protectionism lead their computer industry redundant compared to other countries. Whereas China showed a success in comparison to Tanzania and Brazil. Since china adopted a dual track strategy. Those who needed state, state provided them protection from foreign competitors while exposing market to the economic agents who were able to adjust with laws of market.

Third chapter focuses on the key *debates on the role of the state and development*. There are several debates about the free market economy (neo-liberalism) and government intervention in economic affairs (statist perspective). Authors have discussed different point of views of different economists i.e. ideas of Adam smith and Keynes in mid-19th century to late 20th

² Modernization theory assumes the optimistic view that a developing country will be developed by the virtue of adopting economic and social structures adopted by developed countries such as industrialization

³ Ideas of structuralism assume that developed countries use developing countries as a mean to become develop, which result in the disparity between rich and poor countries

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century, for selecting neo liberalism. For instance in Ecuador neoliberal policies bring inequalities and more poverty. Whereas in Botswana government made development plans; bureaucracy was enough autotomized to make and implement decisions. There was a clear division of labor and cooperation between political side and administrative sides. As a result they did not need any help from IMF or any other institution/ country to run their country effectively. Fourth chapter focused on *institutions and development*. It talked about formal institutions of state and their role towards the state's development. State with poorly designed institutions are called failed states and have certain weak points i.e. lack of legitimacy of government, ethnic conflicts, problems in exercising control, education and health care problems, excess of corruption and wastefulness. Practically some of the institutions may have a strong practice than others for example in Columbia administrative institutions are strong than judicial institutions. Four types of institutions are discussed in this chapter specifying high quality and low quality institutions in general. In order to determine the political and economic outcomes these institutions modify the behavior of political actors or vice-versa.

Chapter five tends to describe first obstacle to development and that is *poverty Traps*. This chapter explains how poverty is defined i.e. absolute poverty and relative poverty and how it is measured i.e. monetary approaches, policy outcomes, calorie consumption etc. Then it explains different theories to reduce poverty. For instance a state can reduce poverty by improving social safety nets, building human capital by educating citizens, improving health care facilities, improving agriculture in a state, providing support to most needy citizens etc.

Chapter six focuses on intractable *instability* in a state that is a product of coups and civil wars. Economic conditions, personal ambitions and threats to the military are some of the factors that result in coups in a state. A number of examples of coups are discussed in book. Civil wars are long duration circumstances that are resulted for taking power in a region or to change of government policies. Mostly poorer countries face these conditions of instability. Though these are cyclical in nature and breaking this cycle is extremely difficult but internal transformations i.e. security sector reforms can control the outbreaks against government. For instance case study of turkey, Sierra Leone, Indonesia and Ghana are discussed in book.

Chapter seven explains *corruption* as a barrier to development. Corruption can occur in all four types of institutions (i.e. administrative, judicial, security and political). Corruption can affect economic prospects of a state. Moreover it can increase inequality, isolating poor from

state services, tempering merit. Subtle changes can minimize corruption in a state for instance Georgia did by improving merit, increasing pays and minimizing rules and regulations in security institutions.

Chapter 8 focuses on *colonialism and geography*. First half of the chapter focuses on colonialism. Historical background of different regions and their colonization has been discussed that has begun around 1500s and continued for 400 years. The poor colonial policies and their legacies in structures, rules and procedures (i.e. educational policies, trade policies, land distribution and labor policies) are the biggest obstacles to development. These procedures were destructive and unfair mostly. Second half of the chapter is comprised of the geography of developing countries. A country's climate and proximity to oceans and rivers contribute much in a state's development. States whose geography is not feasible or they were part of colonies does not mean that they can never be developed. For instance the case of Panama is an example of excellent management.

Chapter 9 sheds light on *debt and financial crises* of developing states. There are different kinds of debts which are making developing countries more indebted to developed countries and IMF. It is important for indebted countries to take active role in monitoring their own spending, restructure their financial institutions, control debt servicing and manage loans for different constructive projects. For instance Malaysia was able to completely get rid of economic crises by state's effective policies.

Chapter 10 discusses the *natural disasters and natural resources*. Environmental curses can be sometimes very detrimental for economic growth of a state especially to developing countries. Certain examples of developing countries are discussed in the book which were not able to overcome the losses from natural disasters even after decades i.e. Haiti, Chile, Iran, Pakistan etc. those states who have institutional capacity suffers less than otherwise. States having natural resources are fortunate naturally. If institutes are prepared to diversify their exports and rent their natural resources at best terms and conditions, they can get huge economic development in return contributing to the long run development. For instance Trinidad and Tobago were more democratic and more transparent institutionally so were more developed.

Chapter 11 explains disease vulnerabilities. Most of the developing states have more outbreaks of infectious diseases. Infectious diseases negatively affect economies. Spending more on healthcare facilities and governments' will, can eradicate infectious diseases at state level i.e.

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Senegal and Uganda.

Chapter 12 examines *globalization* as a means to development of any state. Increasing trade, capital and investment, rise of multinational corporations are the consequences of globalization. There are different views on globalization, some authors view globalization as the reason to decrease poverty and growing economic outputs while others view it as leaving adverse effects on poverty and economic condition of states. For instance Mauritius and Botswana make a substantial growth in their economy by grabbing global opportunities.

Chapter 13 focuses on the external actors (*foreign aid and NGOs*) willing to help developing countries. There are certain NGOs working in several developing nations in order to help mitigating sever challenges they are facing in human development and health issues. Sometimes a rift starts between NGOs and Government institutes when similar projects are catered by them. i.e. issues over project funding, challenging authority of institutes. Need is to balance NGO's role and state's role and design integrates tasks rather than separating them.

Chapter 14 concludes the whole discussions covered in the chapters. It discusses the fact that some states are poor than others. Need is to use the institutes to bring change and overcome the retrograde economy of a state. Although the failure stories are more than success stories, but states can overcome the obstacles to development and make their position more better.

“Development and the State in the 21st Century: Tackling the challenges facing the development world” is a good effort of amalgamating theory and practice with strong facts and figures. The authors have used multiple reports of the World Bank and Transparency International in order to build a strong ground for constructing their arguments. Moreover, multiple researches and case studies made it easier to understand the phenomenon and compare the situations from better to worse.

This book is easy to understand since it is written in simple and understandable language. The book has potential to be used as textbook for Public Administration students and civil servants. It can prove as an excellent source to provide the theory of development, its practicalities in real world and how history is shaped the things worldwide. Although, local context of each country is different and we cannot generalize the solution of one case to another, but students can get an insight of a general idea and can modify the policy according to the local context.

By having a profound analysis of book, some gaps are identified, that can be filled in next

editions. This book focuses mainly the internal obstacles to development to the developing countries. However, states also face external challenges that are difficult to control by the state itself e.g. globalization, maintaining bilateral relationship, terrorism, advances on borders from enemies of state, influencing international markets by developed states, hostilities by developed states for approaching costly natural resources etc. such obstacles should also be included in the book to broadening the perspective and enhance readers' understanding.